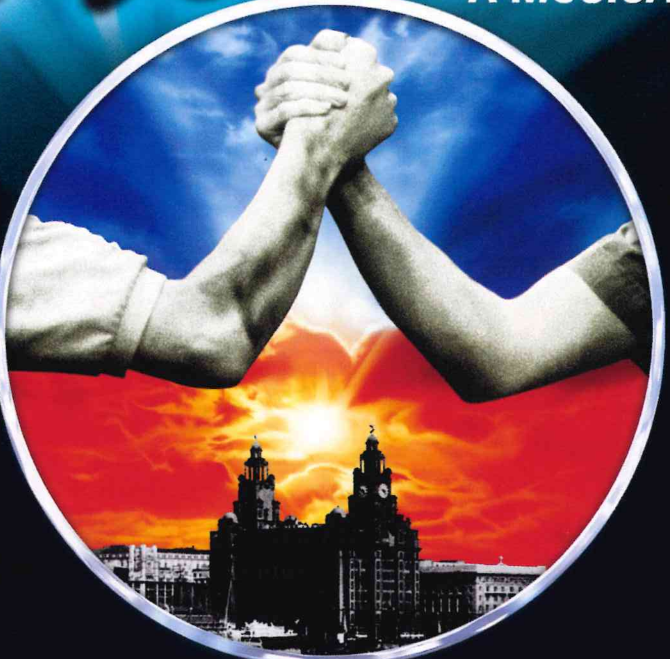
BILL KENWRIGHT LTD
presents

WILLY RUSSELL'S
BLOOD Brothers
A MUSICAL



Book, Music and Lyrics by
WILLY RUSSELL

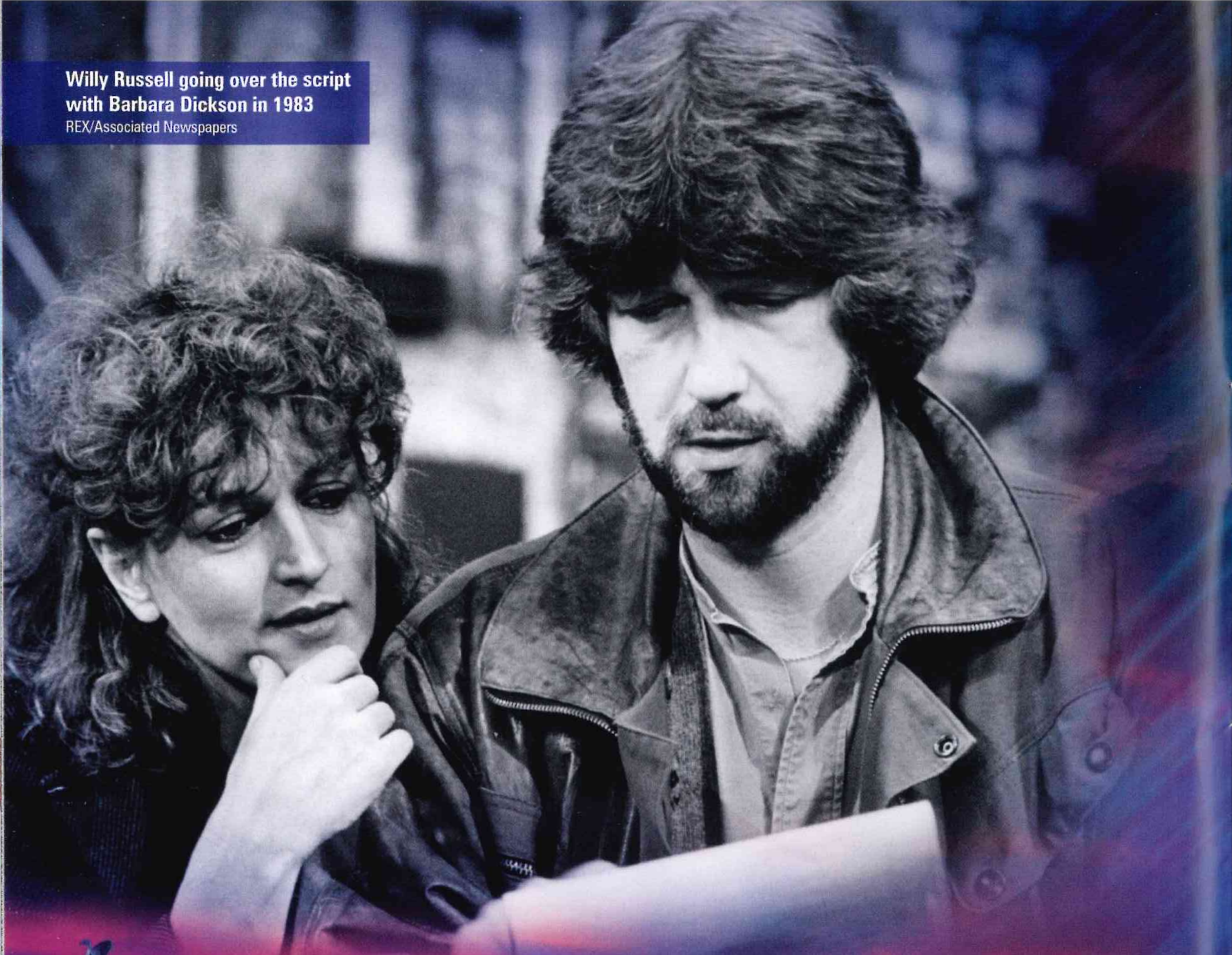
Directed by **BOB TOMSON & BILL KENWRIGHT**

Resident Director	Musical Supervisor	Designed by	Lighting by	Sound by
TIM CHURCHILL	**MATT MALONE**	**ANDY WALMSLEY**	**NICK RICHINGS**	**DAN SAMSON**

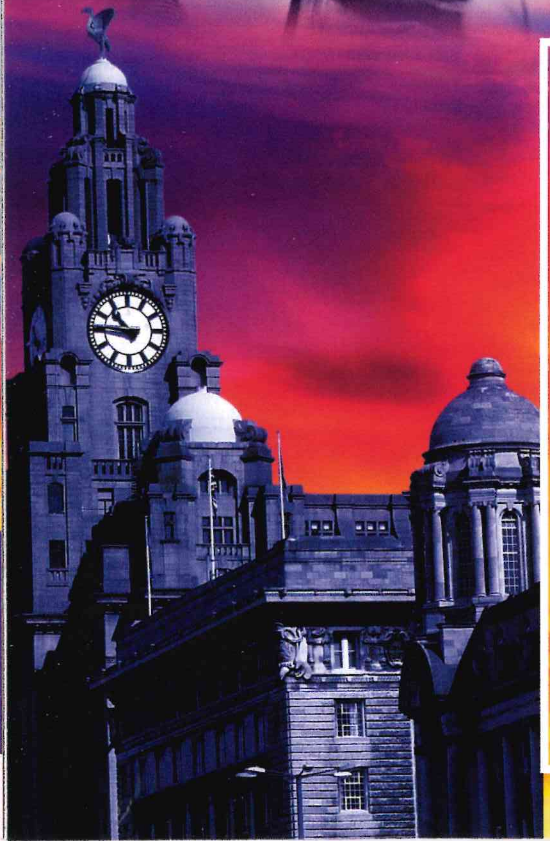
THEATRE ROYAL
ROYAL CONCERT HALL

TUE 9 – SAT 13 SEP 2025

programme design & print JOHN GOOD www.johngood.com



Willy Russell going over the script with Barbara Dickson in 1983
REX/Associated Newspapers



CREATOR WILLY RUSSELL TALKS TO ELAINE PEAKE ABOUT HOW IT ALL BEGAN, WHERE IT'S BEEN AND WHERE IT MIGHT BE GOING NEXT...

EP: How did you come up with the idea of writing a full-scale musical?

WR: The kind of theatre I was involved in right from the word go didn't make a distinction between musical and non-musical. When I started work at the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool, it was commonplace to have music as part of your show. *Blood Brothers* was written very much in the Everyman 'house style' of the day, and that was the period when the resident company included people like Bernard Hill, Jonathan Pryce, Alison Steadman, Julie Walters, Pete Postlethwaite, Bill Nighy, Matthew Kelly, Antony Sher - you were working with that kind of actor. All of them could sing (some better than others!), and some of them played a musical instrument, so it was the way we did it. We'd all been influenced by Bertolt Brecht, but Brecht sort of shot through Joan Littlewood, not sombre black drapes Berliner Ensemble. We had a theatre which really did relate to the people in whose city it was housed, and music was just one way of doing that. To some people *John, Paul, George, Ringo…and Bert* was a musical - it certainly won Best Musical Awards. To me it was no different from other shows that I'd done there. *When the Reds* was the first thing I did, which was an adaptation of an Alan Plater play and had about fifteen songs in it. So it was no great leap to writing *Blood Brothers*. When I thought of the idea I vaguely knew the form and structure it would take. I suppose the big difference was that with the previous shows they had been plays with songs, whereas with *Blood Brothers* I wanted it to be composed, not sung-through as such, but I wanted to think about the way all the music related to the story, rather than putting individual songs here, there and everywhere.

EP: How did you get the idea of the story?

WR: I was walking along one day; I lifted my right foot and by the time I put my foot down I had the story. Sometimes that happens, but very very **very** rarely. Thinking back, when I was at my first secondary school when I was eleven, I do remember somehow being involved in some class that was looking at a play. And I have this dim memory of the idea of a baby being taken in one direction and its nurture being decided by which baby was taken from a pram. Now I don't know if I've imagined that, I haven't looked for this story that might have influenced me - it was just the kernel of an idea sown all those years ago.

EP: Human beings generally seem to have quite a fascination with twins.

WR: That was actually something I didn't particularly share. What I was interested in was what happens to them when they go their separate ways. If she picked the other one out of the pram, would it have been any different? I didn't want a dry academic 'nature versus nurture' debate to go on, but that is what's at the centre of it. The other big influence was seeing Jimi Hendrix for the first time ever on television performing 'Hey Joe'. Just think about the lyrics: 'Hey Joe where you goin' with that gun in your hand? I'm goin' down to shoot my old lady, I caught her messin' round with another man…' It's not only the lyrics, it's the fantastic kind of urban violence that's in that song. It's terrifying and exhilarating at the same time.

EP: When did you take the leap to compose the whole of *Blood Brothers* yourself?

WR: I was frightened of doing it for years. I had the entire story - I would often be on the point of going to sleep and I would think of another idea, so the story was building over many years. At first I just thought that I wouldn't be taken seriously if I was the composer, so I talked to other people about doing it, but nothing came of any of those discussions. Then one day I just thought, 'This is crazy, do it yourself.' Then I had to do a play for Paul Harmison for Merseyside Young People's Company and I decided to do just that.

EP: When *Blood Brothers* first went on tour around schools, what kind of feedback did you get from those audiences?

WR: Fantastic! Absolutely fantastic. But they are the most difficult audience on this earth. Kids don't sit there politely having paid £40 for posh seats, putting up with rubbish. They'll just tell you straight. If they're in a school where they're not allowed to walk out if the discipline's fairly tight, they'll still make it known what they think of being made to sit there. I know because I was one of those kids myself once, and I remember how horrendous it is to be patronised or condescended to or made to suffer some crap. I knew it was my job to hook the most disinterested, antipathetic little buggers sitting at the back, the ones like me all those years ago! Most schools are great, but sometimes you'd go to one where the staff don't give a toss, the show was coming up to 70

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The gang of four – Bill Morrison, Alan Bleasdale, Willy Russell and Chris Bond – in charge at the Liverpool Playhouse at the time of the original *Blood Brothers*
REX/Daily Mail

minutes so they just had that time off. They'd just point you in the direction of the hall and you'd find two hundred truculent, resentful kids. Five actors would have to walk into the middle of that space and, without any lights or scenery and a minimum of props, just go bang! and grab them. And I have to say I never saw it fail to do that.

EP: How did *Blood Brothers* then make the leap to become a full-blown musical?

WR: I always intended it to be a full-scale musical, but I kind of 'borrowed' it to fulfil the brief for Paul Harmison and MYPT. So the day it opened at a place called Fazakerley Comprehensive, I went back to my office and began to write the full-scale musical version of it. I knew that if I allowed this smaller version to become too fixed in my brain, I'd never move on to the full musical version. I told Chris Bond at Liverpool Playhouse that it would be ready in three months time. But it was twelve months and more before I finished it, I just didn't realise how long it was going to take me to get it how I wanted it.

EP: And even after that you made more changes?

WR: We opened at the Playhouse in Liverpool and I saw that there was a swathe of the second act that really needed to be redone. We were playing to packed houses for three months or so. Our normal practice was to open a show and then start working on it, start to cut down and restructure. That's the wonderful thing about theatre, it's an ongoing organic process. However, we couldn't afford to pay an eleven-piece orchestra lots of extra time to make massive changes, so we had to wait until we got to London for the re-rehearsals and put in all the rewrites at that stage.

EP: How did the show get into the West End?

WR: Bob Swash, who had produced *John, Paul, George, Ringo…and Bert*, had come to see the schools version of *Blood Brothers* on tour in Liverpool, and absolutely loved it. He had been badgering me for years to write another musical and, after he'd seen the show, he said, 'When are you going to write a musical for me?' and I said, 'You've just seen it, Bob'. So he asked me who was going to write the music and I gulped and said, 'Me'. I saw him gulp too for a second and then he put his smile back on. I said I would compose the first act music before he had to commit to it. So I did that and when I went to his office in London and played it to him, he was ecstatic. So there was a London producer involved right from the word go.

EP: How many countries has *Blood Brothers* been seen in now? Presumably it gets translated into the various languages?

WR: Mostly, but certain things don't. It's hilarious in Kyoto hearing them speaking in Japanese and suddenly hearing 'roast beef'! There are also pirate versions playing in countries that don't sign up to the Berne Convention. Probably the most bizarre was the Siberian production directed by Glen Walford. She got out there to find an oligarch who was completely besotted with the show, but saw it as a Christian parable - he had hired a 250-piece choir, and she somehow had to incorporate this choir into the production! She said when it got to 'Tell Me It's Not True', it was unbelievable. There was a great production in Barcelona and in fact, one of the amazing things about *Blood Brothers* is that it does do well in places where the culture doesn't include musicals. It does seem to be the musical that's loved by people who hate musicals.

EP: What do you think is the secret of the show's enduring success?

WR: People do see it more than once and one of the reasons is that it is a musical with a strong book, it has got a tale to tell. This might indict it as not being a real musical, but if all the electricity fails in the theatre and you can't light the show or amplify it, you can still do the show with a piano, and even if the piano blows you can still do the show *a capella*, and it will work. It simply relies on that primal, ageless, universal thing of 'I'm going to tell you a story.' Your ears prick up and you stay with it, and there's no better experience.

A production of *Blood Brothers* in Minami, Japan in 1995
Photo by Shochiku

Kiki Dee, Con O'Neill, Robert Locke in *Blood Brothers* at the Albery Theatre, 1988
Photostage/Donald Cooper

THE LATE BILL KENWRIGHT, PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR OF *BLOOD BROTHERS* IN DISCUSSION WITH ELAINE PEAKE.

EP: How did you first become involved with *Blood Brothers*?

BK: In the seventies and the eighties there was a sort of divide in the city; you were Everton or Liverpool, Alan Bleasdale or Willy Russell; I'd worked a lot with Alan and didn't really know Willy. Of course, I'd heard that *Blood Brothers* was the new Liverpool sensation when it was at the Playhouse there, and that it had come to London but was not faring too well at the box office. I went to see it with my friend, the director Alan Parker. We sat in a not very full house and saw a musical that was one of the greatest I'd ever seen, and I walked out of the theatre bemoaning the fact that it wasn't me who had produced it! I felt I knew the way to turn it round and make it into something that wouldn't have empty seats. After that I suppose it could be said that I plagued Willy for a year or two, trying to persuade him to let me have a stab at it. Eventually, he did let me and here we are, more than thirty years later.

EP: I think it's 40 years since it was first produced in Liverpool and 35 since you brought it back to the West End?

BK: And we'd been on tour for two years before bringing it back to the West End, so I probably got hold of it in 1986.

EP: Did the show have a slow start in some ways?

BK: Not really. I think Willy was very wary of the West End. Like most writers of his ilk, he doesn't write for any particular kind of audience. The West End is such a cut-and-thrust kind of commercial alleyway, maybe he felt that it wasn't for him and I accepted that. He originally gave me just the touring rights, and it was during the eighteen months of touring when I worked on the show as director, that we became close friends. I know it was a very big moment for him - it was on our third tour - when he said, "OK, let's take this back into London." I don't think it had ever happened before - a show closes because it's not done particularly well at the box office and a few years later it's back; it doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. But I think I'd proved my love for the production. I remember Willy wrote me a wonderful note on the Broadway opening night saying, "Everything I ever wanted from *Blood Brothers* I can now see on that stage." I think trust was important to Willy, he needed to know that he had a producer who would look after his show. So it wasn't a slow start, but it was a slow-ish journey getting it to the West End, and it was quite a different production from the original.

EP: Have you ever felt you needed to update it in any way?

BK: No. People ask me why *Blood Brothers* is the phenomenon that it is. What is it about a musical that can play 24 years in the West End and at the same time week in, week out, bring audiences to their feet in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Dublin? Everywhere it goes it plays to packed houses and standing ovations. Lots of producers will tell you that about their shows, but with *Blood Brothers* it's true, it's absolutely true. It doesn't have crashing chandeliers, it doesn't have a helicopter, it doesn't have a chorus line, and the only answer I can ever give to the question of why it is such a phenomenal success is - Willy Russell. He's got in him something that is unique. To write the book, the lyrics and the music of any musical is almost unheard of in this day and age. And to do that with a musical that still, more than 40 years after he's written it, plays to standing ovations and packed houses must mean there's something special going on. I don't know what Willy has that makes his writing so special, but I do know he has it. I'm not sure Willy knows either. I remember once we were talking specifically about a line in *Shirley Valentine*, where she says something like, "Costa kissed my stretch marks. He told me that he loved my stretch marks, they were a sign of me and of womanhood", and then she pauses and looks at the audience and says, "Aren't men full of shit?" I asked Willy, "Where did that come from?" And he said, "I don't know, but I do know that when I wrote it I looked at it and gave myself a round of applause."

Blood Brothers is a very simple story but everything about it is epic. I don't know where that comes from, all I can tell you is, I know it works and I know it works because of Willy Russell.

EP: There have been some interesting castings through the years, haven't there?

BK: I originally wanted someone who was as near to Barbara Dickson as I could get, that is, a pop star who could sing wonderfully, and Kiki Dee just fitted the bill. Hearing her voice singing 'Tell Me It's Not True' was one of the great moments of my auditioning career. I have to say there was an even greater moment when Petula Clark finished on Broadway and, out of the blue, Carole King rang and asked if I would consider her to take over. I am a huge fan of Carole King, and I dashed over to New York to audition her. I remember getting to the theatre very early in the morning. I went straight to the bathroom to get a quick shower. As I'm in there I can hear Carole warming up on stage, and hearing that wonderful Carole King rasp singing 'Tell Me It's Not True', I just got goose bumps.

Petula has been a great servant of *Blood Brothers*, and she and David Cassidy turned it round on Broadway. The show has given me so many leading ladies, I feel privileged to have worked with them. I think Willy always wanted a singer playing Mrs Johnstone and, whenever we talked about the future, we always spoke in terms of singers. Lyn Paul has had a love affair with it for over two decades, and we were delighted to welcome her back again and again. Lyn is one of my favourite Mrs Johnstones. As is Linda Nolan, and the sadly departed Stephanie Lawrence. Melanie C completed a season in London and received the kind of critical acclaim that no Mrs Johnstone has ever received before. She was incredibly the first 'scouser' to play the role and was extraordinarily wonderful on stage and off. A great girl!

No matter when they leave or where they go to, they always want to come back. Helen Reddy did it in Australia, in America, in London and on tour - people just fall in love with the piece.

When you get the privilege of producing and directing a musical like *Blood Brothers*, you have to protect, love and nurture that privilege. I think that's another reason why it's been around such a long time. Everyone involved with the show loves and respects it, and that comes across in the performances up and down the country, and all around the world. We do actually love and admire what we are working on, and without that it couldn't have been the long-running show it is.

Barbara Dickson as Mrs Johnstone at the Lyric Theatre, 1983
Photo*stage*/Donald Cooper

Spice Girl Melanie Chisholm as Mrs Johnstone, with Stephen Parlfreman and Richard Reynard in the 2009 production
REX/Nils Jorgensen

EP: How does the production's continued success mirror Liverpool's cultural growth in the last decade?

BK: It was fitting that a newly-rehearsed production of *Blood Brothers* opened at the Empire Theatre in January 2008, the year Liverpool was named as European City of Culture, because its very existence sums up the 'rubber ball' mentality of the city. You simply can't keep it down for too long before it bounces back. In the 1950s it seemed in many ways to be the city that time had forgotten. It was no coincidence that the Merseyside musical boom started in the early 1960s in Liverpool. We wanted desperately to have something we could call our own. We discovered this music from the merchant seamen who came to our port. We feverishly claimed it - held on to it and played it in caverns and cellars all over the city. And of course that sparked one of the biggest musical revolutions in the world. Similarly, it's no coincidence that Liverpool spawns writers like Russell and Bleasdale, because we are fiercely protective of our home and fiercely devoted to our heritage. Neither Willy nor Alan have left Liverpool. To do what I do you have to be in London, but those two prove their commitment to the city day after day, week in week out. What I have observed over recent years is a real celebration of growth in Liverpool, and cultural growth at that. We are proud of our city. You ask any Brit abroad where they come from, they will inevitably say England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales. Ask a Scouser and he'll instantly say, 'Liverpool'. Even though I've been in London for so long, my answer will always be, 'Liverpool'. I've lived in London twice as long, but Liverpool is my home.

Bill Kenwright CBE, Producer and Director
4 September 1945 – 23 October 2023

VIVIENNE CARLYLE

MRS JOHNSTONE

Vivienne Carlyle is a Scottish actor and singer who works in the UK and internationally.

Theatre credits include: Mrs Johnstone in *Blood Brothers* (Phoenix Theatre, London and UK tour); Songbird in Cirque du Soleil's *Saltimbanco* (South American tour); Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (New London Theatre – West End debut); *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Novello Theatre – original London cast); Mrs Lyons in *Blood Brothers* (Phoenix Theatre, London and UK tour); Grizabella in *Cats* (Royal Caribbean); Usha in *Lightseeker* (Resorts World Theatre, Singapore); Mrs Walker in *The Who's Tommy* (UK tour); Queen Cackle in *Geronimo Stilton Live on Stage* (Singapore, Hong Kong); Mother Gothel in *Tangled the Musical*, Lady Tremaine in *Twice Charmed* (Broadway guest artist, Disney Cruise Line) and *Songs for Everafter*, a one-woman show of Disney classics (also co-writer, Disney Cruise Line).

Television credits include: Mindy McCready in *Autopsy: The Last Hours of Mindy McCready* (ITV) and Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* for *Blue Peter* (BBC).

Recording credits include: *ALBA*, *1719*, *Sands of Time* and *Showtime* for Scottish Opera, *Shehallion* and *Lightseeker* (original cast recording). Vivienne also performed backing vocals for Barry Manilow, Michael Bolton and Dina Carroll, and has worked extensively as a voice-over artist.

KRISTOFER HARDING

NARRATOR

Kristofer graduated from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts with a first class honours BA in Musical Theatre.

Musical theatre credits include: Simon Zealotes/covered and played Jesus in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (UK tour); Narrator in *Blood Brothers* (UK tour); Woof in *Hair* (German tour); Rusty in *Starlight Express* (UK and Scandinavian tour); Roger in *Grease* (London's Piccadilly Theatre) and cover Jamie in UK premiere of *The Last Five Years* (London's Menier Chocolate Factory).

Other musical theatre credits include: Magaldi in *Evita* and Woof in *Hair* for Broniwski Productions at the acclaimed Ljubljana Theatre Festival in Slovenia.

Other credits include: lead vocalist and vocal captain on Cunard's *Queen Mary II* and the maiden voyage of Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth*.

Kristofer also performed as a featured backing vocalist on Josh Groban's sell-out UK tour.

Mrs Johnstone **VIVIENNE CARLYLE**
Narrator **KRISTOFER HARDING**
Mickey **SEAN JONES**
Eddie **JOE SLEIGHT**
Mrs Lyons **PAULA TAPPENDEN**
Linda **GEMMA BRODRICK**
Sammy **MICHAEL GILLETTE**
Mr Lyons **TIM CHURCHILL**
Policeman/Teacher **ALEX HARLAND**
Donna Marie/Miss Jones **FRANCESCA BENTON-STACE**
Postman/Bus Conductor **GRAEME KINNIBURGH**
Perkins **DANNY KNOTT**
Neighbour **DOMINIC GORE**
Brenda **LATESHA KARISA**

Other Parts Played By

FRANCESCA BENTON-STACE, TIM CHURCHILL, LATESHA KARISA, GEMMA BRODRICK, GRAEME KINNIBURGH, DANNY KNOTT, MICHAEL GILLETTE, ALEX HARLAND, DOMINIC GORE

UNDERSTUDIES

Narrator **TIM CHURCHILL**
Mrs Johnstone **PAULA TAPPENDEN**
Mickey, Perkins, Postman/Bus Conductor **DOMINIC GORE**
Eddie **DANNY KNOTT**
Mrs Lyons, Brenda **FRANCESCA BENTON-STACE**
Mr Lyons, Sammy, Policeman/Teacher **GRAEME KINNIBURGH**
Linda, Donna Marie/Miss Jones **LATESHA KARISA**

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one interval

CREATIVE TEAM

Directed by **BOB TOMSON AND BILL KENWRIGHT**
Resident Director **TIM CHURCHILL**
Musical Supervisor **MATT MALONE**
Designer **ANDY WALMSLEY**
Lighting Designer **NICK RICHINGS**
Sound Designer **DAN SAMSON**
Musical Director **JEREMY WOOTTON**

Company Stage Manager **HARRIET SAFFIN**
Deputy Stage Manager **ANDREW HOLTON**
ASM/Book Cover **ELLE ROBERTS**
Tech Assistant Stage Manager **RHYS LEE-WHELLAMS**
Head of Wardrobe **DAVID HOY**
Sound No 1 **BO COLLIER**
Sound No 2 **ASHLEY HAGYARD**
Technical Swing **PHILIP CONLON**
LX No 1 **ROBERT GARNHAM**
LX No 3 **CHARLOTTE MAYERS-JONES**

Production Carpenter **MAITLAND WAKEFIELD**
Production Electrician **JAMES CHANT**
Production Sound Engineer **DAVE PREECE**

BAND

Musical Director / Keyboard 1 **JEREMY WOOTTON**
Assistant Musical Director / Keyboard 2 **BEN PAYNE**
Guitars **JAMES BARBER**
Bass **GLENN MUSCROFT**
Drums **JON HOOPER**
Saxophones **RICHARD WIMPENNY**
Trumpets **SAM PIERCE**

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

Overture

Marilyn Monroe **MRS JOHNSTONE**

My Child **MRS LYONS, MRS JOHNSTONE**

Easy Terms **MRS JOHNSTONE**

Shoes Upon the Table **NARRATOR**

Easy Terms (reprise) **MRS JOHNSTONE**

Kids Game **SAMMY, LINDA, MICKEY AND ENSEMBLE**

Shoes Upon the Table (reprise) **NARRATOR**

Shoes Upon the Table (reprise) **NARRATOR**

Bright New Day (preview) **MRS JOHNSTONE**

Long Sunday Afternoon **MICKEY, EDDIE**

Bright New Day **MRS JOHNSTONE**
AND **FULL COMPANY**

ACT TWO

Marilyn Monroe **MRS JOHNSTONE**

Shoes Upon the Table **NARRATOR**

That Guy **MICKEY, EDDIE**

Shoes Upon the Table **NARRATOR**

I'm Not Saying a Word **EDDIE**

Miss Jones **MR LYONS, MISS JONES** AND **ENSEMBLE**

Marilyn Monroe **MRS JOHNSTONE**

Light Romance **MRS JOHNSTONE, NARRATOR**

Shoes Upon the Table/Madman **NARRATOR**

Tell Me It's Not True **MRS JOHNSTONE**
AND **FULL COMPANY**

SEAN JONES

MICKEY

Sean is absolutely thrilled to be returning to the part of Mickey. He has had a long and successful association with the role, having played it in both West End and touring productions.

Recent theatre credits include: Peter James's *Picture You Dead* (UK tour); *The Trial* (Stoke Rep); *The Turnip Field* (Stoke Rep and Turbine Theatre); *Wave Me Goodbye* (Theatr Clwyd); *Tick Tock* (Hope Street Theatre Liverpool); the title role in *Macbeth* (The Epstein Theatre) and The Narrator in *Stream (Hurricane of Change)* with Mike Peters and The Alarm (Venue Cymru).

He also is a regular panto comic with numerous seasons and is currently resident comic at The Floral Pavilion New Brighton, appearing as Lester the Jester in *Sleeping Beauty* later this year.

Television credits include: *Emmerdale*, *The Royal Today*, *Hollyoaks* and *The Chase*.

Film credits include: *Sharks in Colwyn Bay*, *The Circle: Awakening*, *Approaching Shadows* which recently premiered at the BFI Southbank (Tape Films) and *Wings* directed by Karlton Parris (Baby Dog Films).

JOE SLEIGHT

EDDIE

Joe graduated from the Guildford School of Acting with a first class honours degree in Musical Theatre.

Joe has recently finished playing Brian in *101 Dalmatians* in the West End and is extremely excited to be back on tour playing Eddie!

Some of Joe's previous credits include: understudy Boq in *Wicked* (Apollo Victoria Theatre, West End); Brian and first cover Tom in *101 Dalmatians* (Hammersmith Apollo); Rudolph and Puppetry Director in *Rudolph the Reindeer's Rednose Roadshow* (Bolton Octagon); Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Middle Temple Hall, West End London); Perkins and Eddie in *Blood Brothers* (UK tours); Jack in *Jack and the Beanstalk* for UK Productions (Floral Pavilion, New Brighton); Prince Charming in *Cinderella* for St Helens Theatre Royal (2022/23); Peter Pan in *Peter Pan* for Qdos/Crossroads Entertainment (Dartford Orchard Theatre, Royal & Derngate Theatre, Plymouth Theatre Royal and Wycombe Swan in High Wycombe); Dandini in *Cinderella* (Towngate Theatre); The Russian in *Chess* (Union Theatre, London); Roger in *Grease* (Yvonne Arnaud Theatre); Benji in *Benji The Fish - children's musical* (UK tour) and the international and Chinese tour of *JunNk the percussion musical*.

Joe has also travelled the world appearing as a guest entertainer for Norwegian Cruise Line and Disney Cruise Line.

In the pandemic, Joe co-created the interactive live show *Castle Crusaders* (2020–22, season one and two) and he appeared as Jackson.

Joe is also a television and radio presenter, presenting shows for Google TV, Salford City Radio and Cheshire's Silk 106.9, and has co-created/hosted German Oompah shows for the Bierkeller brand in Liverpool, Nottingham, Halifax and across the country.

Social media: @Joe_sleight_

PAULA TAPPENDEN

MRS LYONS

MRS JOHNSTONE AT CERTAIN PERFORMANCES

Paula trained at the Guildford School of Acting.

Paula has had a long association with *Blood Brothers*, first playing Mrs Lyons at the Phoenix Theatre in the West End and happily returning to the *Blood Brothers* family many times over the years.

Other theatre includes: Dory in *Blessings* (Riverside Studios, Hammersmith); Marie in *Calendar Girls* (national tour); Lady Constance, Harriet and Alice in *The March* (UK tour); Kitty in *Taking Steps* (Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne); Andy in *Stepping Out* (Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne); Mrs Mouse in *The Wind in the Willows* (UK tour and QE2); Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz* (QE2); Dorigen and Guinevere in *The Canterbury Tales* (Arts Theatre, West End and Mermaid Theatre, London); Lucia in *Black Coffee* (UK tour); Jenny in *Nightmare* (UK tour); Rachel in *The Exorcism* (UK tour); Queen Elizabeth I in Johnny Ball's *Let the Force Be With You* (national tour) and Marie Curie in *The Michael Faraday All Electric Roadshow* (national tour); Miss Honey in the premiere production of Roald Dahl's *Matilda the Musical* (Farnham Theatre and national tour); various roles in *Doctor Who: The Ultimate Adventure* (national tour) and Kit Kat Girl in *Cabaret* (Harrogate Theatre).

Pantomimes include principal roles in: *Cinderella* (Princess Theatre, Torquay); *Aladdin* (King's Theatre, Southsea and Queen's Hall, Widnes); *Dick Whittington* (Eye Theatre, Suffolk); *Cinderella* (Theatre Royal, Winchester, Wyllyotts Theatre, Potters Bar and Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury); *Ali Baba*, *Humpty Dumpty* (Library Theatre, Luton) and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Princess Theatre, Torquay, Wyllyotts Theatre, Potters Bar and The Grand Opera House, York).

Comedy sketch shows in London include: *NewsRevue*, *Sports Revue*, *As Time Goes By*, *After Eight Stint* and *Continental Brechtfast*.

Television includes: *Tom Jones* (BBC); *Crimewatch* (BBC) and numerous commercials/voice-overs and corporate films in the UK and abroad.

GEMMA BRODRICK

LINDA

Gemma trained at Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts, BA (hons) Acting.

Theatre credits include: *Our Lady of Blundellsands* (original cast, Liverpool Everyman); *Blood Brothers* (UK tour); *Cilla the Musical* (original cast, UK tour); *Yellow Breck Road* and *Lost Soul 2* (The Royal Court, Liverpool); *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* (The Elgiva Theatre); *Don't Cha Wish Your Scouser Was Boss Like Me?* (tour); *A Christmas Carol* (53two); *RIP* (King's Head Theatre); *Secrets* (tour); *Desperate Scousewives* (Floral Pavilion); *Sleeping Beauty* (Echo Arena); *Escorts the Musical* (tour); *Assassins* (Chelsea Theatre); *Once a Catholic* (Landor Theatre); *Beside the Seaside* (Unity Theatre); *Little Red Riding Hood* (LAStheatre); *Gormenghast* (Edinburgh Festival Fringe); *Be Our Guest* (tour); *Musicals in the Night* (tour); *Twopence to Cross the Mersey* (Empire Theatre); *Oliver!* and *A Christmas Carol* (Playhouse Theatre).

Television credits include: *Cilla* (ITV); *The Good Karma Hospital* (ITV); *4 O' Clock Club* (CBBC) and *Sex and the Chippy* (E4).

Film credits include: *Crownton Dobby*, *Stalin My Neighbour* and *Suburban Gothic*.

Follow Gemma on Instagram @gemmabrodrick

MICHAEL GILLETTE

SAMMY

Michael is originally from St Helens in Merseyside and trained at East 15 on the MA Acting programme in 2021.

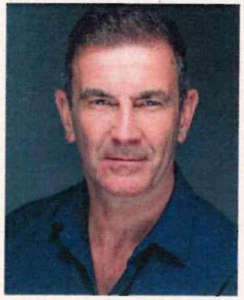
His major theatre credits include: Mr Darcy in *Gay Pride and No Prejudice* (The Union); B in *Moderation* (Greenwich Theatre) and Jekyll/Hyde in *Jekyll & Hyde* (The OSO Arts Centre).

WILLY RUSSELL'S BLOOD Brothers

AT THIS PERFORMANCE,

THE ROLE OF MR LYONS WILL BE PLAYED BY

TIM MAXWELL-CLARKE



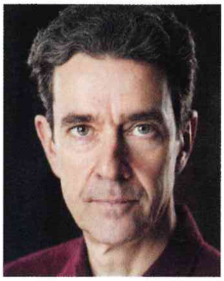
Theatre credits include: Hospital Ghost / Lionel Ferguson in *Ghost The Musical* (UK Tour); Pop in *Gypsy* (The Mill at Sonning - Winner: Best Musical Production, UK Theatre Awards 2023); Bobby/Mr Croft in *Dreamboats & Petticoats* (UK Tour); Monsignor O'Hara in *Sister Act* (UK Tour); Mark Minton in *The Glenn Miller Story* (West End and UK Tour); Norman Petty in *The Buddy Holly Story* (West End, UK Tour, Toronto, Hamburg); Mr Lyons and u/s Narrator in *Blood Brothers* (West End and UK Tours); Simon Zealotes and u/s Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (UK Tour); Eddie Bowes in *Dusty Springfield The Musical* (UK Tour); Slim in *Of Mice And Men (Nottingham Playhouse)*; Mr Hunter in *The Demon Headmaster* (UK Tour); and Creech in *In The Midnight Hour* (Belfast, Basingstoke).

Television credits include: Mick Foster in *Emmerdale*, Sir Richard Byngham in *The Spanish Armada* and Detective Inspector Goodman (*Canary Wharf)*.

Tim has also appeared in numerous television commercials and has translated numerous musicals and plays from German into English and has provided surtitles for productions at the Deutsches Theater Berlin, the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus and Theater Basel. He is also a multi-instrumentalist (sax/clarinet) and is a keen amateur Roman archaeologist.

ALEX HARLAND

POLICEMAN/TEACHER



Alex trained at Cambridge University and Drama Studio, London.

He previously appeared in *Blood Brothers* at the Albery Theatre, the Phoenix Theatre (including the final West End cast), and the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto. He also sings on the international cast recording with Petula Clark and David Cassidy and the London cast recording with Stephanie Lawrence. He is delighted to be returning to the show.

Other theatre includes: The Devil in *The Soldier's Tale* (Turner Sims, Southampton); *MacSwiney* (Etcetera Theatre and Irish Cultural Centre); *Enduring Song* (Southwark Playhouse); *Never Mind the Botox* (Thundermaker Productions); *Days of Plenty* (Eastern Angles); *One for the Pot* (Theatre Royal, Windsor); *Silent Partners* (Instant Classics); *Game Over* (Bread & Roses); *Beauty and the Beast* (Dukes Theatre, Lancaster); *The Lion and the Jewel* (Bloomsbury Theatre); *Waiting for Godot* (national tour); *The Trial* (Young Vic); *A Slight Ache* (Jermyn St); *The Overcoat* (British Council tour to Spain and the Canary Islands); *The Chairs* (Tottering Bipeds); *South Pacific* (Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch); *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Orchard Theatre Co).

Film includes: the comedy horror feature *Sky Sharks* (Fuse Box Films); Nosferatu in the award-winning short *The Dare Side of the Moon* (Alex Constantin Productions); *Radio Silence* (BBC New Creatives).

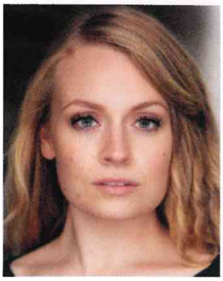
Television includes: *The Crown* (Netflix); *House of Switzerland* (pilot for Forster Films); *Killer on the Line* (Thumbs Up Productions).

Audio work includes: Tom de Luca in *Zombies, Run!* (Six to Start, seasons three to eight) and *The Reaper's Year* (Radio 4).

FRANCESCA BENTON-STACE

DONNA MARIE / MISS JONES

MRS LYONS AT CERTAIN PERFORMANCES



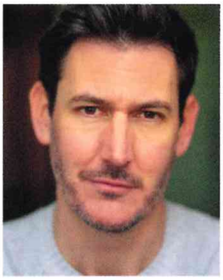
Training: London School of Musical Theatre.

Theatre credits include: dance captain and swing in *Jersey Boys* (Norwegian Bliss); ensemble and first cover Madame Giry in *Love Never Dies* (Asia tour); Jellylorum/Griddlebone in *Cats* (Taiwan tour); Wendy and Myrtle in *The All New Adventures of Peter Pan* (York Theatre Royal); Marion in *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* (Norwegian Epic); vocal swing in *Burn the Floor* (Norwegian Epic); Jellylorum/Griddlebone in *Cats* (international tour); Eileen in *Wonderful Town* (Ye Olde Rose & Crown); lead vocalist on board *AIDAstella* and *AIDAmar* (AIDA Cruises); principal vocalist in *Musical Starnights – The Best of Musicals* (European tour) and singer in *'Tis the Season* (Jermyn Street Theatre).

Francesca is represented by Russell Smith Associates Ltd and is thrilled to be joining the cast of *Blood Brothers*. She wishes to thank her family and friends for their constant love and support.

GRAEME KINNIBURGH

POSTMAN/BUS CONDUCTOR



Graeme comes from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

Theatre credits include: *Whistle Down the Wind* (West End and national tour); *Rent* (European tour); *Doctor Dolittle* (national tour); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (national tour); *The Pirates of Penzance* (Kilworth House Theatre); *With a Little Help From My Friends* (Greenwich Theatre); *Aspire: To Be a Star* (Capacity World, Qatar); *Fine Fine Fine!* (The Customs House) and *West End to Broadway* (lead vocalist). Numerous pantomime appearances including: Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, Prince Charming in *Cinderella* and *Aladdin*. Internationally: Lead Vocalist for Thomson Cruises (*SS Emerald*) and Cunard Cruise Lines (*MV Caronia*).

Graeme is delighted to be returning to *Blood Brothers*, a show that is very close to his heart and he has had an association with since 2009!

Twitter: @GraemeKinny

DANNY KNOTT

PERKINS

Danny began his training at Newcastle College Performance Academy before moving on to study at the London School of Musical Theatre.

Theatre includes: Frankie Valli in *Jersey Boys* (Norwegian Cruise Line); Perkins/first cover Eddie in *Blood Brothers* (UK tour); swing/first cover Bob Crewe/second cover Frankie Valli/third cover Bob Gaudio in *Jersey Boys* (Trafalgar Theatre, London); swing/first cover Riff Raff, Rocky and Eddie/Dr Scott in *The Rocky Horror Show* (UK tour); Robin Gibb in *Saturday Night Fever* (UK tour); Chase in *Paw Patrol Live! The Great Pirate Adventure* (UK and international arena tour); Tom in *Fatbusters the Musical* (London); Stephen in *Red Riding Hood* (Leicester Curve/Leeds Playhouse) and Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London).

Commercials include: Sony PlayStation '4 the Players' and Barclays 'All to Play For'.

Danny is represented by Russell Smith Associates Ltd and is delighted to be returning to the cast of *Blood Brothers*.

Instagram: @dannyknott89

DOMINIC GORE

NEIGHBOUR

MICKEY AT CERTAIN PERFORMANCES

Dominic studied at The Centre for Advanced Training in Dance before completing his training at the Merseyside Dance and Drama Centre, Liverpool.

Recent credits include: Doody in *Grease* (Secret Cinema); Wrestler in *The Gathering* (Channel 4); Joey in *Saturday Night Fever* (UK tour); Aladdin in *Aladdin* (Shone Productions); featured dancer for Pepsi (commercial); cover Peter Pan in *Peter Pan* (directed by Chantelle Nolan); lead male wire artist opposite Mohamed Salah for Anti-Drug Campaign (Egyptian Government, directed by Austin Spangler); dance captain and understudy Prince in *Cinderella* (Crossroads Pantomimes); Perpetrator for HM Government commercial (Sweet Shop); featured role for Gillette's 'Made of What Matters' (Saatchi & Saatchi); ensemble and understudy Prince in *Sleeping Beauty* (Crossroads Pantomimes); ensemble in *Peter Pan* (Qdos); dancer and singer for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (international, JP Christensen); lead vocalist for Boyband Reloaded (Sam Conlan); lead actor in television commercial for Adidas (Mint Casting); dancer and singer for Costa Cruises (Karen Langford); ensemble and understudy Dame and Muddles in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Chris Pizzey); dancer in *Lord of the Flies* at the Liverpool Empire (Matthew Bourne).

Dominic is delighted to be joining the cast of *Blood Brothers* and would like to thank his family and friends for their ongoing love and support.

Represented by Alliston Taylor Artist Management.

LATESHA KARISA

BRENDA

Latesha is a Liverpool-born actress and has just graduated from Performers College Manchester.

Her love for the arts began at a young age and was nurtured during her time at LIPA Sixth Form College, where her passion for performing truly flourished. *Blood Brothers* marks her professional debut, and she is thrilled to be joining the cast.

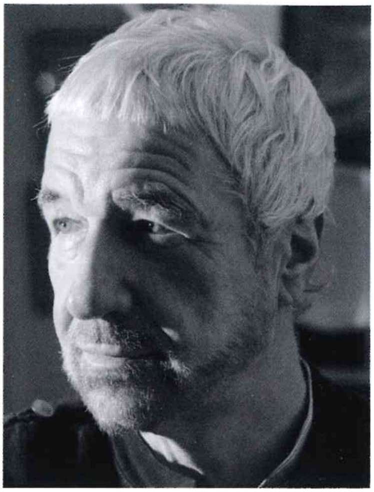


Photo: paulcoxphotos.com

WILLY RUSSELL

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS

Willy Russell's career spans more than five decades; born in Liverpool in 1947, he left school at 15, became a women's hairdresser, and part-time singer/songwriter performing on the folk scene, before returning to education and becoming a teacher.

Whilst at St Katharine's College, Willy began writing drama and, in 1972, took a programme of three one-act plays to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe where they were seen by John McGrath. McGrath recommended Russell to the Liverpool Everyman who commissioned the adaptation, *When The Reds...*, which was Willy Russell's first professional work for theatre.

Russell's breakthrough work, commissioned by Liverpool Everyman, was *John Paul George Ringo... and Bert* which transferred to the West End winning 'Best Musical' - Evening Standard and London Theatre Critics Awards.

Alongside further stage works, *Breezeblock Park* (1975), *One For The Road* (1976), *Stags and Hens* (1978), Russell proved himself a gifted and accomplished screenwriter with television films, *Death of A Young, Young Man, Daughters of Albion, Our Day Out* and *One Summer*, all consolidating his reputation as a writer whose work could reach a wide audience without ever compromising the seriousness that lies at the heart of all his work.

Commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company, *Educating Rita* is now a modern classic. Since its 1980 premiere and long West End run, the play has been translated and produced in almost every part of the globe, garnering awards both for its author and for many of the actors who have played the roles of Rita and Frank.

Returning to the Liverpool Everyman in 1986, Willy Russell created the iconic *Shirley Valentine* which went on to an acclaimed West End run, earning Olivier awards for both its author and star, Pauline Collins, before transferring to New York for a Broadway run and a Tony Best Actress award for Pauline Collins. Like the earlier *Educating Rita*, *Shirley Valentine* became an international hit with productions being mounted throughout the world.

Both *Educating Rita* and *Shirley Valentine* became enormously successful feature films with Michael Caine, Julie Walters and Pauline Collins all winning Oscar Nominations for their respective roles, as did Russell for his *Educating Rita* screenplay.

Willy Russell's other worldwide theatrical success has been *Blood Brothers*, 'a Liverpudlian folk opera'. *Blood Brothers* (1983) won the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Musical and its 1987 revival saw over 10,000 consecutive performances during its 24-year West End run becoming one of the longest running musicals in West End history. Simultaneously, there were UK touring and major international productions, including a 2-year run on Broadway where *Blood Brothers* garnered a Drama Desk Award and multiple Tony nominations.

Originally a celebrated TV film, Willy Russell's *Our Day Out* was first adapted for the stage in 1983 and rapidly went on to become one of the most widely produced plays of all time, its popularity still as strong as ever amongst professionals, amateurs, schools and youth theatres across the UK.

As well as writing for theatre and screen, Willy Russell published his critically acclaimed debut novel *The Wrong Boy* (2000), which was subsequently translated worldwide.

Returning to his singer/songwriter roots, in 2002/03 Russell wrote, recorded and co-produced the album *Hoovering The Moon*, also co-producing fellow playwright/songwriter Tim Firth's album *Harmless Flirting*. Further collaboration between the pair resulted in a live concert tour which became known as *The Singing Playwrights*, a unique brew of song, music and spoken word, presented at Edinburgh during the 2004 Festival Fringe.

In 2010, Willy Russell developed *Our Day Out the Musical* with updated text, a new score and lyrics. Productions in 2010 and 2011 at Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre drew huge audiences and rave reviews.

In 2013, Liverpool John Moores University established the Willy Russell Archive, an invaluable repository of Willy Russell's papers, files, correspondence, manuscripts, contracts, photographs, posters and other material relating to the creation and production of the author's work across all media from 1964 to the present.

Major UK and international productions of *Blood Brothers*, *Shirley Valentine* and *Educating Rita* are staged every year. January 2023 was the 40th anniversary of *Blood Brothers* opening at The Liverpool Playhouse and the production of *Shirley Valentine* starring Sheridan Smith completed a sell out West End run in June 2023 at the Duke of York's Theatre, London. It has been nominated for two Olivier Awards – Best Revival and Best Actress for Sheridan Smith.

For the last few years, Willy has been developing his skill as a painter, with his artwork being exhibited in Liverpool and London. He continues to explore the various forms of fine art and print making.

Willy Russell continues to be one of the most celebrated and widely produced writers of his generation with works regularly being produced throughout the world.

www.willyrussell.com

BOB TOMSON
DIRECTOR

Bob, has been an actor, stage and screen writer, a college and university lecturer in drama, and now divides his time as an award-winning professional director in both theatre and television. He is a BAFTA, Olivier and Tony award nominee for his screen and theatre work.

His production of Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers* has won every major British theatre award, recently completed a record 25-year run in London and was nominated for three Olivier Awards. His other long-running musical success, Leslie's Bricusse's *Scrooge*, has enjoyed over 20 years of regular seasons, including three London runs at the Palladium and Dominion theatres. His current production of Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice's *Evita* has been running in the UK for 11 years, including seasons in London's Dominion and Phoenix theatres.

His international productions include: *Evita* (Europe) and *Blood Brothers* (Australia, New Zealand, Canada and, most significantly, in the US – where the show ran for three years and was nominated on Broadway for no fewer than six Tony Awards, including Best Director).

Notable actors associated with this production and its subsequent US tour include: David Cassidy, Petula Clark, Carole King, David Soul and Helen Reddy. Bob directed Richard Chamberlain in the title role of *Scrooge* for the US tour, while its Australian and Japanese premiere productions won Bob Best Director awards. His Tokyo production of Patrick Stewart's one-man version of *A Christmas Carol* won the prize for Best Production. His current production of *Ghost the Musical* has recently finished runs in Moscow, Paris, Dubai and Istanbul.

His other London West End productions include: the 60s musical *Dreamboats and Petticoats* (Savoy Theatre – nominated for Best New Musical at the Olivier Awards); John Godber's smash-hit skiing comedy *On the Piste* (Garrick – Olivier Award nominated for Best Comedy); Dennis Lumborg's controversial drama *One Fine Day* (Albery – nominated for Best Regional Play); Karoline Leach's *The Mysterious Mr Love* (Comedy Theatre); Jeff Wain's *The War of the Worlds* (London Dominion); *Evita* (London Dominion/Phoenix Theatre) and *The Glenn Miller Story* starring Tommy Steele (London Coliseum), all for Bill Kenwright Ltd.

Recent national touring productions include: *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Oliver!*, new musical treatments of *Half a Sixpence* and *Doctor Dolittle*, the jukebox musical *Carnaby Street* and the world premiere musical adaptation of the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Chichester Festival Theatre). Current UK productions include: *Evita*, *Blood Brothers*, *Ghost the Musical* and *Cilla the Musical* (prior to the West End).

Television direction includes: BBC drama series *Hero to Zero* (for which he was nominated for a BAFTA Award and whose subsequent full-length film version was sold to 53 countries); *Is Harry on the Boat?*, several seasons of the soccer drama serial *Dream Team* (Sky TV); *Night and Day*, *The Bill*, *Heartbeat* (ITV); *Family Affairs* (Channel 5) and *Brookside* (Channel 4). Bob was line producer for season three of *Dream Team*, helping the drama series win every Indie award that year for Best Drama Series. He continues to be a guest director on: *Emmerdale* (ITV); *Father Brown*, *Doctors* (BBC) and *Fair City*, the continuing drama series (RTÉ).

MATT MALONE
MUSICAL SUPERVISOR

Matt graduated with an honours degree in Music from King's College London and the Royal Academy of Music, with further studies at the Royal College of Music. Whilst there, he was an organ scholar under Professor Ian Curror and studied composition with Sir Harrison Birtwistle.

As a Conductor and Musical Director in London's West End and throughout the UK he has worked on: *Spamalot* (Harold Pinter Theatre, Playhouse Theatre and UK tour); *Blood Brothers* (Phoenix Theatre, West End and UK tour); *Billy Elliot the Musical* (Victoria Palace Theatre); *My Fair Lady* (UK tour); the epic Anglo-Indian musical *The Far Pavilions* (Shaftesbury Theatre); *Kiss Me, Kate* (UK tour); Boy George's *Taboo* (The Venue, Leicester Square and UK tour); *A Tale of Two Cities* (Birmingham Alexandra Theatre); *Follies* (Wimbledon Theatre); *Snoopy the Musical* (Rosemary Branch Theatre, New Players Theatre and Jermyn Street Theatre); *Honk!* (Elgiva Theatre); *Lucky Stiff* (Canal Café Theatre); *An Evening With Burt Bacharach* (Taplow Court); *It's Christmas, Carol* (Hen & Chickens Theatre); *NewsRevue* (2001 Edinburgh Festival) and *Dido and Aeneas* (King's College, London).

He has also performed on: *Mamma Mia!* (Prince of Wales and Novello theatres); *The Producers* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane); *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (London Palladium); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (UK tour); *BBC Proms in the Park* (BBC Philharmonic Orchestra); *The Baker's Wife* (Royal Academy of Music); *West End Live* (Trafalgar Square) and the BBC's *Children in Need*.

He is currently supervising a new musical based on the songs of Marc Almond and Soft Cell. Matt recently had the great honour of conducting at *Sunday Night at The London Palladium With Bill Kenwright*. This year marks Matt's 30th year associated with *Blood Brothers*.

ANDY WALMSLEY

DESIGNER

Andy has designed many Broadway and West End theatre musicals, including *Blood Brothers* and *Buddy - the Buddy Holly Story*. When *Buddy* opened, Andy was 21 and the youngest designer ever to work in the West End. *Buddy* ran in London for 13 years and soon became a huge international hit, with a total of 22 duplicate versions running worldwide. The show opened in New York and Andy became the youngest designer to work on Broadway.

Andy has designed many of the biggest shows in the history of television, including *Pop Idol, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?, The Comedy Awards*, three *Royal Variety Performances, Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway, The BAFTA Awards, You've Been Framed, An Audience With..., Tiswas* and *Blankety Blank*, to name but a few, and in the USA where Andy now lives: *American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance, America's Got Talent, The Biggest Loser, The Emmy Awards, Miss USA*, and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* The set for *Millionaire* has been copied to the last detail identically in 108 countries. The Oscar-winning smash movie *Slumdog Millionaire* heavily features Andy's set and was nominated for 10 Academy Awards. The *Millionaire* set is the most duplicated scenic design in history.

Over fifteen years ago, Andy moved to the States to design *American Idol*, for which he won an Emmy Award. He went on to work on *America's Got Talent, So You Think You Can Dance* and many other network TV shows. Along with working in television, theatre, on cruise ships and Disneyworld, he has also designed more than a dozen Las Vegas shows.

Andy's work can be seen in every developed country on earth and he has created more than a dozen shows that have been reproduced globally, making his set designs more duplicated than any other designer.

NICK RICHINGS

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Nick's recent work include: *The Rocky Horror Show* (UK tour); *Bhangra Nation* (Birmingham Rep); *Bronco Billy* (Charing Cross Theatre); *Cruel Intensions: The '90s Musical, Frank and Percy* (The Other Palace); *Accolade, Alone Together, Darker Shores, The Cherry Orchard* (Theatre Royal Windsor); *Pride & Prejudice* (*sort of), A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Vienna English Theatre); *Saturday Night Fever* (Peacock Theatre and UK tour); *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Hackney Empire); *Grease, Berlin Berlin, Beauty and the Beast* (German tour); *Dirty Dancing* (UK tour); *Wizard of Oz* (Birmingham Rep); *The Nightingales* (Bath Theatre Royal and UK tour); *Fat Friends the Musical* (UK tour) and *Touched* (Nottingham Playhouse).

Nick's West End designs include: *The Glenn Miller Story* (London Coliseum); *Nell Gwynn* (Apollo Theatre and Shakespeare's Globe); *Forbidden Broadway, Just Jim Dale* (Vaudeville Theatre); *Monty Python's Spamalot* (Playhouse Theatre); *Simply the Best* (Savoy Theatre); *La Cage aux Folles* (Playhouse Theatre and Broadway – Tony Award nomination for Best Lighting and Tony Award winner of Best Musical); Damon Albarn's *Monkey: Journey to the West* (Royal Opera House and also Lincoln Center in New York, Paris and the O2); *Whistle Down the Wind* (Palace Theatre and US tour); *The Rocky Horror Show* (Playhouse Theatre); *Fiddler on the Roof*, starring Topol, *Scrooge* starring Tommy Steele (London Palladium); *The Mystery of Charles Dickens* (West End, UK tour and Broadway); *A Slip of the Tongue* with John Malkovich (Shaftesbury Theatre) and *Derren Brown: Something Wicked This Way Comes*.

UK tours include: *Dirty Dancing, Saturday Night Fever, The Rocky Horror Show, Cilla the Musical, Ghost the Musical, Priscilla Queen of the Desert, The Glenn Miller Story, The Sound of Music, Jesus Christ Superstar, Monty Python's Spamalot, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Blood Brothers, Starlight Express, Spend Spend Spend!, Strictly Come Dancing: The Professionals, Armstrong and Miller – Live, Laughter in the Rain, Jekyll & Hyde* and *Guys and Dolls*.

Nick's regional rep work includes: *Accolade, Frank & Percy, The Cherry Orchard* (Theatre Royal Windsor); *While the Sun Shines, Time and the Conways* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Ladykillers, Witches of Eastwick, Sleuth, Ben Hur, Marriage of Figaro* (Watermill Theatre); *Mother Courage, The Seagull, The Heretic, A Doll's House, Glenn Gary Glenn Ross, Great Expectations, Faith Healer* (Library Theatre Manchester); *The Price, Our Man in Havana, The Hound of the Baskervilles, Travesties* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Sweet Charity, Midsummer Songs, Mods and Rox, Guys and Dolls* (New Wolsey Ipswich); *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Maid of Butterworth* (Theatre by the Lake Keswick).

International work includes: *Beauty and the Beast* (Germany); *Ghost the Musical* (Moscow, Dubai, Paris); *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* (New Zealand); *Saturday Night Fever, Mary Poppins, The Producers, Beauty and the Beast, Chess* (all Copenhagen); *A Sigh of Love* (Shanghai Ballet); *The Rocky Horror Show* (South Africa, Korea, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand); *Cinderella* (Tokyo) and *Farewell My Concubine* (Beijing).

DAN SAMSON

SOUND DESIGNER

Sound Design includes: *I Wish You Well*, *Come Dine With Me*, *Silence* (Norwich Playhouse, Edinburgh Festival Fringe); *I'm Almost There* (Summerhall at Edinburgh Festival Fringe); *Heathers the Musical* (@sohoplace, Theatre Royal Haymarket, UK tour and The Other Palace); *Kathy and Stella Solve a Murder!* (Ambassadors, Edinburgh Festival and UK tour); *Abenteuerland das Musical* (Capitol Theatre Düsseldorf); *Calendar Girls the Musical* (UK tour); *Berlusconi the Musical* (Southwark Playhouse Elephant); *The Famous Five* (Theatr Clwyd and Chichester Festival Theatre); *Fisherman's Friends the Musical* (Hall for Cornwall, UK tour and Canada); *Passion* (Hope Mill Theatre); *The Cher Show* (UK tour); *The Osmonds: A New Musical* (UK tour); *Love Letters* (Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Berlin Berlin* (German tour); *Saturday Night Fever* (UK tour); *Cilla the Musical* (UK tour); *Ghost the Musical* (UK tour, international tour, Paris Mogador and Moscow MDM); *Rain Man* (UK tour); *Rough Crossing* (UK tour); *Cabaret* (UK tour); *La Cage aux Folles* (UK tour); *Evita* (Dominion, Phoenix, UK and international tour); *High Fidelity the Musical* (Turbine Theatre); *Eugenius!* (The Other Palace); *This Is Elvis* (UK tour); *How the Other Half Loves* (Theatre Royal Haymarket, Duke of York's and UK tour); *Save the Last Dance for Me* (UK tour); *Dreamboats and Petticoats* (UK tour); *The Cat and Canary* (UK tour); *The Lady Vanishes* (UK tour); *The Case of the Frightened Lady* (UK tour); *The Outsider* (Three Pin Productions Ltd, Cunard); *Echoes in the Night* (Three Pin Productions Ltd, P&O); *A Judgement in Stone* (UK tour); *Side Show* (Southwark Playhouse); Jeff Wayne's *The War of the Worlds* (Dominion); *Rehearsal for Murder* (UK tour); *Sinatra on Stage* (The London Palladium); *The Glenn Miller Story* (London Coliseum and UK tour); *The Sound of Music* (UK tour); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (UK tour); *Twelve Angry Men* (UK tour); *Blood Brothers* (UK tour); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Newcastle Arena and UK tour); *Dreamboats and Miniskirts* (UK tour); *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Colchester Mercury and Southwark Playhouse); *Carrie the Musical* (Southwark Playhouse); *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story* (Theatre Royal Windsor); *Brief Encounter* (Theatre Royal Windsor); *Mystery on Air* (Theatre Royal Windsor); *Fame the Musical* (UK tour); *The Shawshank Redemption* (UK tour); *All Creatures Great and Small* (UK tour); *The Small Hand* (UK tour) and *Before the Party* (UK tour).

Dan is also currently qualifying as a dog trainer.

JEREMY WOOTTON

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Musical theatre credits include: *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* (The Other Palace and UK tour); *Cruel Intentions: The '90s* Musical (UK and Ireland tour); *Ghost the Musical* (UK tour); *Heathers the Musical* (Soho Place/ The Other Palace/UK tour); *BIG the Musical* (Dominion and UK tour); *Saturday Night Fever* (UK tour); *Elf the Musical* (Channel 5/Dominion/UK tour); *The Sound of Music* (UK tour); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (UK tour); *Eugenius!* (The Other Palace); Jeff Wayne's musical version of *The War of the Worlds* (Dominion); *Sleepless the Musical* (workshop); *Evita* (Dominion/Phoenix and UK/international tour); *Scrooge* (UK tour); *Starlight Express* (UK tour); *We Will Rock You* (UK tour); *Whistle Down the Wind* (UK tour); *La Cage aux Folles* (UK tour) and *Magic at the Musicals* for Magic FM (Royal Albert Hall)

Recordings include: *Elf the Musical* (original London cast) and *Big the Musical* (original London cast).

Jeremy is delighted to be working with such a talented company. He would like to thank his wonderful family and friends for their continued support.

FOR BLOOD BROTHERS 2025

Associate Lighting Designer
DARRAN CURTIS

Keyboard programming
HENRY BRENNAN

Lighting equipment supplied by
LX1 PRODUCTION SERVICES

Sound equipment supplied by
STAGE SOUND SERVICES

Transport by
PAUL MATHEW TRANSPORT
SOUTHERN VAN LINES

Graphic design
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Rehearsal photography
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Production Photography
JACK MERRIMAN

PR
EMMA HOLLAND PR

With thanks to
AMY ROBERTSON

BILL KENWRIGHT LTD

PRODUCER

Bill Kenwright Ltd is one of the largest and most established commercial theatre and entertainment producers with over five decades experience of producing more than 500 productions to date – including tours, West End and international productions. Bill Kenwright Ltd is part of the Bill Kenwright Group of companies, alongside Bill Kenwright Theatres and film and television production and financing company BK Studios.

Bill Kenwright CBE
4 September 1945–23 October 2023

A beloved partner, father, grandfather, friend, and founder of his namesake companies, Bill Kenwright CBE was driven by his passions and devoted his life to them; his deep love of theatre, film, music and his beloved Everton FC, and the families they created.

In a multi-award-winning career spanning six decades, Bill produced over 500 West End, Broadway, UK touring and international theatre productions, films and music albums. His impact on the arts industry has been profound. Bill helped to launch the careers of many producers, performers and creatives, and for many years was estimated to employ more actors in a year than any other employer aside from the BBC. His tireless work across the UK also revitalised the touring network in Britain, with barely a stage in the UK that Bill hadn't brought a show to. He impacted the lives of thousands, whether that be through the launching of careers or his unending loyalty, generosity and unfaltering friendship and support.

"Bill was one of the greatest producers this country has ever known" Rufus Norris Artistic Director and CEO of The National Theatre.

West End productions include: *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* (The Other Palace); *Death of England: The Plays* (@sohoplace); *Boys From the Blackstuff* (Garrick); *Heathers the Musical* (Haymarket, The Other Palace and @sohoplace); *Cruel Intentions: The '90s Musical*, Ian McKellen and Roger Allam in *Frank & Percy* (The Other Palace); *My Son's a Queer, (But what can you do?)* (Ambassadors Theatre); *Saturday Night Fever* (The Peacock); *Love Letters* (Haymarket); *The Best Man* (Playhouse); *The Exorcist* (Phoenix); *Evita* (Dominion); *How the Other Half Loves* (Haymarket); *The Go-Between* (Apollo); *Let the Right One In* (Apollo); *Twelve Angry Men* (Garrick); *Cabaret* (Savoy); *Blood Brothers* (24 year run in the West End at the Albery & Phoenix Theatres); *Written on the Heart* (RSC – Duchess); *Brief Encounter* (Lyric); *The Pitmen Painters* (Duchess); *The Wizard of Oz* (The London Palladium); *On the Waterfront* (Haymarket); *Sunset Boulevard* (Comedy); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Adelphi); *The Crucible* (RSC – Gielgud); *Whistle Down the Wind* (Palace); *A Man for All Seasons* (Haymarket); *Scrooge* (The London Palladium); *A Few Good Men* (Haymarket); *Festen* (Lyric); *The Glass Menagerie* (Apollo); Judi Dench in *All's Well That Ends Well* (RSC – Gielgud) and 10 years of the Peter Hall Company, with credits including Judi Dench in *Hay Fever* (Haymarket); *The Gift of the Gorgon* (Wyndham's); *Filumena* (Piccadilly) and Jessica Lange in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Haymarket).

On Broadway: *Travels With My Aunt* (Drama Desk Award); *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Tony Award); *Medea* (Tony Award); Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (four Tony Awards); *The Chairs* (six Tony Award nominations); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Glass Menagerie, Primo, Festen, Passing Strange* and *Guys and Dolls. Blood Brothers* played for three years at Broadway's Music Box Theatre. Co-producer *Elvis – The Concert* arena tour with Elvis Presley Enterprises.

Heathers the Musical returned off-Broadway at New World Stages in 2025 to rave reviews and has extended performances into 2026.

BILL KENWRIGHT GROUP

Chairperson	**Jenny Seagrove**
Chief Executive	**David Gilbery**
Chief Financial Officer	**Alan Sharp**

BILL KENWRIGHT LTD

Executive Director	**Jon Woodley**
Executive Producer	**Julius Green**
Executive Producer	**Jeremy Meadow**
Producer	**Tracey Childs**
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Production Assistant	**Maddy Chisholm-Scott**
Head of Production	**Phil Bentley**
Associate Production Manager	**Sean Laing**
Head of Marketing, Ticketing and Sales	**Philip Lee**
Marketing Coordinator	**Ellen Burgin**
Tour Booker/Programmer	**Caroline Gorland**

BILL KENWRIGHT THEATRES

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Deputy Head of Venues	**Beth Fox-Williams**

BK STUDIOS

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Associate Producer	**Madeline Silton**
Development Coordinator	**Oli Burgin**
Production Coordinator	**Henry Empson**

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Senior Commercial Accountant	**Kim Davies**
Assistant Accountant	**Ronald Hategeka**
Payroll Accountant	**Timi Dorgu**
Assistant Accountant	**Euan Jonas**

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